

carriers until the later of several situations comes to the attention of the Senate and the Congress: 180 days after the next Quadrennial Defense Review is delivered to Congress, or the Secretary of Defense has certified to Congress the necessary agreements have been entered into to provide the port facilities for the permanent forward deployed aircraft carriers deemed necessary to carry out the mission in their area of responsibility.

The ship, the USS *Kennedy*, was scheduled to start overhaul this coming summer. There was \$334.7 million authorized and appropriated in the fiscal year 2005 for that purpose. So none of the funds in the underlying bill in any way are garnered by this amendment.

In the last-minute budget cut in late December, the decision was made by the Department of Defense to defer maintenance and to decommission the *Kennedy*.

The Chief of Naval Operations testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 10 of this year that all 12 aircraft carriers were in his original budget request. He stated, however, that "this action was driven by guidance" from the office of Management and Budget that "led to the reduction of our overall budget."

That repair and maintenance should go forward, starting this summer as originally planned. It is premature to decommission this ship, which was until this past December scheduled to remain in the fleet until 2018.

The great ship, the *John F. Kennedy*, returned from deployment on December 13, 2004. I understand the ship is in good shape. In fact, in the words of the battle group commander, whose flagship was the *Kennedy*, the ship returned from deployment in "outstanding material condition."

The primary analytical document on military force structure is the Quadrennial Defense Review, or QDR. The QDR is, in the end, a compilation of detailed analyses of what the Nation requires to execute the National Military Strategy.

I believe Congress should show restraint when it comes to making force structure decisions, and only do so in the context of the reports and the analyses produced by the Department of Defense and such other reports that may be relevant. In this case, however, the analyses that are available to us supports a force structure of 12 aircraft carriers, not 11.

I also believe that, at some point, the number of aircraft carriers matters. If the aircraft carrier is not where the President needs it to be when a crisis erupts, its capabilities, however awesome, are not very meaningful.

The deliberations on the next QDR have already begun, in accordance with the law, and it should be delivered by this time next year. It may show, with analytical rigor, that the number of aircraft carriers can be reduced. It may not.

Nowhere is naval power more important to the National Military Strategy than in the Pacific Command Area of Responsibility.

After retirement of the USS *Kitty Hawk* in fiscal year 2008, the *Kennedy*, if retained, would be the last remaining conventional aircraft carrier.

This amendment ensures we have the aircraft carriers necessary to keep this area of the world covered until such time that the QDR, the Global Posture Review, and other uncertainties have been resolved.

I ask my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. President, the CNO appeared before our committee here of recent.

Now I will yield to my distinguished colleague from Florida, who was present during the course of that testimony, to insert that part which was in open session, which I think we should share with our colleagues. Mr. President, I see the distinguished Senator from Florida, my principal cosponsor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, because Senator LEAHY is waiting to speak, I will make very brief comments. The comments to which the distinguished chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee has referred is the Chief of Naval Operations saying it is absolutely essential that he have a carrier home ported in Japan. The fact is, as he projects his forces in the defense of our country in the Pacific area of operations, he needs a carrier in that region so if it has to respond to an emergency, say, off of the coast of Taiwan, it is within a day and a half of sailing to respond to the emergency instead of a week's sailing from a port on the west coast of the United States.

Now, how all this ties in to the *John F. Kennedy* is that we do not know at this point that the Government of Japan—since so much of this decision is influenced by the municipal government in the region of the port—is going to receive a nuclear carrier. Therefore, when the present, conventionally powered carrier, the *Kitty Hawk*, in Japan, is ready to go out of service in 2008, if Japan's posture is they will not accept a nuclear carrier, then we do not have another one that could replace it.

So what the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee is suggesting in this amendment that many of us are sponsoring with him is to keep alive the *John F. Kennedy* through its drydocking, with the funds that have already been appropriated, the \$335 million, of which there are some \$287 million left, to go on through the overhaul process so we have it as a backup.

This, of course, also keeps us then with two major ports for carriers on the east coast so that all of our east coast carrier assets are not in one port. In this era of terrorism, that clearly is one of the lessons we should have learned way back in December of 1941

in the experience of Pearl Harbor: Keep your assets spread out.

I am very grateful to Senator WARNER, who has offered this amendment for the sake of the defense of our country. And for the sake of those of us who have been working this problem, we are very grateful in order to get this in front of the Senate so a policy decision can be made.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SESSIONS. Will the Senator from Vermont allow me the opportunity to offer an amendment? I do not know how long he will be speaking.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, am I correct that the Senator from Alabama only needs a minute or so?

Mr. SESSIONS. Less than that.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will withhold my recognition so he can do that.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized to offer an amendment.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 456

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 456.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alabama [Mr. SESSIONS] proposes an amendment numbered 456.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide for accountability in the United Nations Headquarters renovation project)

On page 183, after line 23, insert the following:

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS RENOVATION LOAN

SEC. 2105. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and subject to subsection (b), no loan in excess of \$600,000,000 may be made available by the United States for renovation of the United Nations headquarters building located in New York, New York.

(b) No loan may be made available by the United States for renovation of the United Nations headquarters building located in New York, New York until after the date on which the President certifies to Congress that the renovation project has been fairly and competitively bid and that such bid is a reasonable cost for the renovation project.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be set aside.